

Cindy Barg Vocal Tips!

Relax your body while singing and in everyday life, but keep your posture intact...always sing and breathe deeply from the belly.

Being tense and rigid cripples your body and mind...also as a singer and performer. Sing at home in front of a mirror to see if you are tense in your body and jaw. Loosen up and get used to seeing yourself sing, it will help you to get over feeling insecure when you're onstage for you'll know what you look like and don't have to worry about that.

Speak and sing out clearly from the belly, up and over your vocal chords without laying on them lazily which tires out your voice very quickly, gives a hoarse/heise sound to your voice and can cause irreparable damage to the vocal chords.

Open up your ears & mind, truly listen to music as often as possible...good music with singers who inspire you.

Silence is also calming, a therapy in itself.

When there is background music tune into it for a moment and listen intensely to the singer's technique and spontaneously try to vocalize their singing style.

Vaporizing essential oils such as Tea Tree, Eucalyptus, Rosemary, Orange, Peppermint...stimulating oils keep you alert and open up the air passages. Mixing in a drop of Lavender oil softens the sharpness of those oils to create a softer, more relaxing effect. And calming oils do wonders to help you wind down or de-stress. Lavender is good for everything.

Try to get proper rest, when busy take chances to escape even for 15 minutes whenever and wherever you find a place to tune out stress and clear your mind. If necessary set an alarm ie. on your gsm/mobile/cell phone. Try to clear your mind until it's time to return to reality. You should feel more able to cope having let go for a moment as stress blocks everything and can lead to serious vocal damage.

Sing and whistle as much as you dare anywhere, anytime...don't mind what people think. You want to be a singer, singing is healthy...so do it!!

I believe everyone should sing. It's the best therapy there is so if someone tries to stop you from singing explain to them that singing makes you feel happy...how can someone who truly cares about you deny you happiness? If they really can't stand it they have fair choice to retire out of ear's reach.

If you are to sing in tune your ears need to be well taken care of. In cold, protect your head and ear canal. If you really must use headphones keep the volume as low as possible to protect your ears from damage as the sound is directed at your eardrums with no escape or air to filter frequencies. While in a very loud environment protect ears with plugs or tissue and try to avoid shouting over the top of everything to communicate with people. If you must shout do it with power from the belly and not the throat.

Try to avoid kissing everybody or shaking hands to say hello or goodbye.

Always use a fresh clean cup or glass when drinking.

Wash hands regularly with soap & splash your face with water.

Keep your teeth & tongue very clean with your toothbrush and a tongue scraper (certainly before singing), also good to use a warm, wet washcloth to clean and pull your tongue to build up the muscle.

Never let your throat dry out.

Don't push your voice...when tired shut up completely. When your voice is exhausted if you really must speak never lay lazily on your vocal chords...speak out clearly from the belly as always for speaking and singing.

If your throat is tired or sore or you feel a cold or flu coming on completely dissolve a lot of sea salt in a small glass of warm water...gargle deeply in the throat and swish it around your mouth to disinfect and protect vocal chords. Also good is to snort a teaspoon of warm salty water into each nasal passage to disinfect sinuses.

If it happens you get kissed by someone who afterwards answers your question "how are you?" with "i'm a bit sick"...excuse yourself to wash your face and hands as soon as possible, blow your nose and rinse your mouth.

Never use Strepsils lozenges or anything that numbs the voice if you must sing or do a lot of speaking on a sore throat, you won't even realize you're doing further damage until it's too late. Better to keep herbal sweets handy (sage/salvia drops, echinacea, propolis, Ricola (but not the sugar-free ones...artificial sweeteners are synthetic poison!)) and water, fruit juice or vitamin drink to keep the voice supple, ease or prevent a dry throat and to soothe. Propolis and Sage drops are fabulous for the voice.

Magnesium is great for strengthening the voice, helps ward off stress, when tired or ill...though don't exaggerate as it's a mineral and can build up in the body. Magnecaps or Promagnor powder, any magnesium of quality from the apothecary/pharmacy is good.

Vitamin C heals (I take Ester C which has a more effective delivery system) and is wonderful as you can take as much of it as you like and whatever your body doesn't need will be flushed away without harm, when making fresh juices I recommend organic produce...fresh lemon juice, pressed apple juice not from concentrate...best is to make your own. Red beet juice. Purple and red grape juice/druivensap is high in vitamin C and is never made from concentrate, it's always pure juice. Food and beverages should be rich in natural color...dark green salads, red beet, tomato paste, avocado, carrot, pumpkin, etc...it's detoxifying whereas if you notice the foods you're eating are mostly dull colors it's reflected in your health.

Sage/Salvia, Lime Blossom/Linde, Thyme, Elderberries and flowers/Vlierbessen and bloemen (the berries contain loads of vitamin C)...many herbs are good for the voice, buy a book about healing herbs and stock up on teas, herbal sweets and syrups. (Vits-Staelens shop, Bij St. Jacobs plein 14, Gent has affordable herbs, for tea bags Dogadan brand has some good ones found in larger Turkish shops)

New addition: Soundcheck Tips, also for in-ear monitors:

Take your time in the soundcheck. Do not allow a Sound Technician to rush you through it even if they are short on time. Remember that, for example, you are just as important as the drummer and they most always take their time to ensure that each drum has the correct sound. In a soundcheck you need to sing soft, hard, low, high and mid-range...surf about with your voice and show them your own personal vocal color so they can best know how to program which frequencies to use for your microphone setting. For those using an In-Ear System...make sure that the floor monitor has a good blend and balance of all the vocalists before adjusting your full in-ear volume. That way you can use both the in-ear to hear yourself and the floor monitor to monitor the vocal blend and balance between all the singers throughout the concert.

If you need more or less of yourself or another singer do not be afraid to communicate with the sound technician throughout the concert...learn the hand signals of pointing to yourself or to whomever you want more or less of in your monitor, followed by a point up or down meaning more or less volume for that voice or instrument.

Always make sure that if there is more than one vocalist that the voices have equal balance in your monitor so you learn how to create a beautiful blend without relying on the soundman to do this for you, you must learn to use your ears and vocal dynamics.